

Sustainable Behaviour Newsletter

Volume 6 July 2026

Food for thought right before the summer recess: SIG presents a double seminar on July 14th

Right before the summer recess, we present to you: two seminar speakers, one from Australia and one from the Philippines. This double seminar will be from 15:00 to 17:00.

The **first** seminar speaker on July 14th is Ellie Gordon, PhD Candidate and Research Assistant at the Matilda Centre for Research on Substance Use and Mental Health at the University of Sydney. In two weeks, she will talk about Understanding Climate Distress: Findings from the Australian Context.

Australia offers a unique lens through which to examine climate distress as it is a country repeatedly confronted with the reality of a changing climate. This talk draws on findings from several studies conducted as part of Ellie's PhD research, exploring how young Australians experience and cope with the psychological burden of climate change.

She will first present findings from a study of 323 young people who lived through the 2019-2020 Black Summer Bushfires, widely regarded as Australia's most catastrophic wildfire event, an event that touched every Australian, directly or indirectly. This research examined attitudes and emotional responses to climate change, and traced the impact of climate distress on mental health and behavioural outcomes across a one-year period. She will then share preliminary findings from the first wave of an ongoing longitudinal study, drawing on survey data from 420 Australians aged 18-30, alongside qualitative interviews conducted between late 2025 and early 2026. Together, these data provide insight into how young Australians experience climate change and climate distress in their daily lives, and what forms of support they want to help them cope. Ellie will close by outlining their plans to co-develop the tools and resources that young people themselves are calling for.

Our **second** seminar speaker is John Aruta. His seminar title and abstract will be published soon on [LinkedIn](#), so keep an eye out for that.

We hope to see you there!



You can join the seminar in person in VMA 1.15 or join [online](#)!

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Our most recent seminar by Anna Castiglione



UNIVERSITY
OF TRENTO

The Psychological Underpinnings of Collective Climate Action

Final Exam

Ph.D. Program in Psychology and Cognitive Science, University of Trento

Candidate: Anna Castiglione

Supervisor: Andrea Bizzego

March 2nd, 2026



In this seminar, Anna, PhD candidate in Climate Psychology at the University of Trento, presented the findings from her PhD dissertation on what motivates people to take collective climate action. While climate change communication often focuses on increasing risk perception, the research showed that climate risk perception alone does not necessarily lead to action. An experimental intervention found that linking climate impacts directly to human emissions increased risk perception, but higher risk perception by itself was not associated with greater action. Instead, the key complementary activating factor was efficacy—the belief that one's climate mitigation actions can make a difference.

Through two additional psychological interventions, in the form of a civic engagement course, participants showed sustained increases in several psychological drivers of climate action and engaged more in advocacy and activist behaviours. The research identified several important triggers for collective action. Aside from efficacy, these included theories of change, emotional engagement, collective identity, and the ability to imagine alternative futures. The main implication is that climate communication should not only highlight risks but also provide people with a sense of agency, clear pathways for change, and opportunities for meaningful action.

Thank you, Anna, for your interesting presentation!



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ECO-MIND: Enhancing pro-environmental behaviors and mental health through nature contact for urban youth

Would you like to help scientific research and earn 40 EUR in gift vouchers by doing it? We are looking for young adults (ages 18-26) to participate in a study examining how exposure to green spaces affects mental health and pro-environmental behaviors.

The study is conducted as part of the ECO-MIND project, run by a research team at Utrecht University, in collaboration with the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and Kyambogo University, Kampala, Uganda.

Participants in this study will be asked to complete a 45 min mental model task, including a survey, and to use an Android-based mobile app for 2 weeks. The participants will be compensated with gift vouchers in the value of 40 EUR (20 after the first part and 20 after the second part of the study).

If you decide to participate, you can do that in your own time by accessing the online environment with the study tasks: <https://shorturl.at/rjGnU>

It is important that you set aside 1 hour of quiet time to complete the study tasks on a tablet or PC (keep the sound on). Do not use a mobile phone to access the online environment, as the screen size is not sufficient to effectively do the mental model task.

Once you access the online environment, you are directed to the M-Tool. A web-based application to do the mental model drawing. You will first do a practice task to get to know the tool. Following that, you will receive instructions on how to do the actual drawing tasks. We will ask you to draw two mental models on how you perceive (1) causes of nature connectedness and (2) outcomes of nature connectedness. This can be a fun task as it gets you thinking about how you connect with nature and what you find important in that connection. Please do not refresh the page while doing the task; your progress will be lost.

After the drawing task, which takes approximately 30 minutes, you will be directed to a survey, which takes another 10 minutes. There, we will ask you some questions about your mental health, your behavior, and your connection with nature, ending with a set of socio-demographic information questions. All the information you provide is fully anonymous.

The final step of the study is to install a mobile app on your phone. The app is Android-based. After you complete the survey, you will be directed to a page with a set of instructions on how to do the installation. At the end of the installation instructions, there will be a space to provide your email address so we can reward you for the steps you have taken so far (mental model drawing, survey, and app installation). The mobile app will prompt you 7 times a day between 8 AM and 8 PM to ask questions about your mood, stress level, and happiness. The app will also collect your location in the background so we can analyze how exposed you were to green spaces in your daily life. You are asked to use the app for 2 weeks. After that, you will receive the second reward for your participation.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to email m.bubalo@uu.nl.



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Summer recess and interactive workshop on the 22nd September

After the double seminar on the 14th of July, the Special Interest Group on Sustainable Behaviour will take a summer recess. The next academic year brings new opportunities. We have three open spots available to give seminars in the next year; in October, November, and December. Besides, we are working towards the Interactive Workshop in September.

The workshop, taking place in De Vagant on Science Park, will consist of two parts: **first** we want to invite our core group to give 10-minute pitches about methodologies or theoretical frameworks that they use which can inspire attendees for their research. These pitches are, besides educational for colleagues who are interested in incorporating sustainable behaviour in their research, a nice opportunity to showcase your research. Besides, they provide a stepping stone for the **second** part of the workshop, in which attendees can develop a short proposal for seed funding for a project with other SIG members.

A separate call for proposals will be sent to the Copernicus Institute soon.



Agenda

14/07/2026 15.00–16.00

SIG Seminar by Ellie Gordon: Understanding Climate Distress: Findings from the Australian Context

14/07/2026 16.00–17.00

SIG Seminar by John Aruta: topic announcement soon on [LinkedIn](#)

22/09/2026 14.00–17.00

SIG Interactive workshop and seed funding opportunity

20/10/2026 15.00–16.00

SIG seminar

17/11/2026 15.00–16.00

SIG seminar

15/12/2026 15.00–16.00

SIG seminar